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TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT POISONINGS IN YOUR HOME DURING NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK



Contact:

Communications Office
786-336-1276

Miami, Fla.—During the 56th National Poison Prevention Week, which is celebrated March 19-25 this year, the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County is sharing tips to ensure the safety of homes and communities and help prevent poisonings. In 2016, nearly 38,000 poison exposure calls reported in Florida were regarding children age 5 and under. Poisonings are completely preventable, and it is every adult's responsibility to keep children safe from harmful exposure to medications and chemicals around the home.

"We salute our partners of the Florida Poison Control Information Centers for their work in saving lives. We are proud of the partnership we have forged and of the impact it has on the health of our community," said Lillian Rivera, RN, MSN, PhD, Administrator/Health Officer, Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County.

"Over eighty percent of calls to Poison Control can be handled by phone without the need of an E.R. visit. Calling Poison Control first prevents unnecessary treatment and health care costs," said Dr. Richard Weisman, Director of Florida's Poison Control Information Centers in Miami."

Florida's Poison Control Information Centers handled 146,664 incoming calls during 2016. Poisonings can happen quickly and it is important to know how to prevent poisoning and what to do in case you or your children consume a potentially dangerous product. Always keep the Poison Help Line at 1-800-222-1222 visibly posted in your home or classroom in case of an emergency.

The Florida Poison Control Information Center Network recommends the following tips for poison prevention:

- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and chemicals, **up and away**, out of site and reach of children;
- Try to purchase products with child-proof packaging when available;
- Keep products in their original packaging, do not store them in food containers;
- Always read product labels and follow directions exactly;
- Do not call medicine "candy" when giving it to children; and
- Install safety latches on cabinets and drawers.

Dr. Jeffrey Bernstein, Medical Director for Florida's Poison Control Information Centers in Miami-Dade County said, "Everyone should enter the Poison Control Information Center's free phone number, 1- 800-222-1222, into their cell phone's contact list. This will make sure you have it when you need it and save precious time during a poisoning emergency".

The Poison Help Line is free, confidential and multilingual and automatically directs the caller to the Poison Control Information Center covering their geographic area.

Download the [poison patrol checklist](#) to help identify and safely store household poisons to keep your family safe and healthy.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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About Florida's Poison Control Centers

The mission of Florida's Poison Control Information Centers is to provide exceptional care for individual patients and supporting public health through information, surveillance, education and research.

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